



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2007

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TSA EMPLOYEE ADMITS SMUGGLING CONTRABAND

TUCSON -- Phoenix Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screener Shandie Dove Varela, 31, of Apache Junction, Ariz., pleaded guilty Tuesday in federal district court to delivering contraband to an inmate at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tucson.

Shandie Dove Varela had been charged with violating Unlawful Distribution of Contraband to an Inmate in a Penal Institution. At her change of plea hearing she agreed to resign her position with the TSA, and admitted the following facts pertaining to the offense: On September 26, 2005, Jesus R. Varela was an inmate in the Federal Correctional Institution Tucson, in the District of Arizona, where he was serving a sentence for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Marijuana (CR 03-1376-TUC-FRZ). Shandie R. Dove [now known as Shandie Dove Varela] entered the Institution to visit Varela, and while sitting next to Varela in the visiting room, was captured on videotape surreptitiously passing pills to Varela. Varela grasped one pill and a second pill fell to the ground. Correctional officers immediately separated the couple, and recovered one pill from Varela and another pill from the floor in the spot Dove pointed out to the officer. The pills were later tested and determined to be Clonazepam, a schedule IV controlled substance.

A conviction for Unlawful Distribution of a Schedule IV Controlled Substance to an Inmate in a Penal Institution carries a maximum penalty of one year, a \$100,000.00 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Frank R. Zapata will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Judge Zapata on May 3, 2007.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. The prosecution is being handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: 06-8047M-FRZ (HCE)
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-053(Dove-Varela)

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